

## Huskar Pit disaster 1838

On 4th July 1838 a terrible disaster occurred at Huskar Pit, it was a coal mine in the village of Silkstone Common near Barnsley (It was owned and managed by a man called Robert C. Clarke).

The day started hot, bright and sunny, but from about 2 o'clock a violent storm raged. Heavy rain fell and nearby streams began to flood, the rain put out the boiler fire of the steam-powered winding engine, so me and my friends that were underground could not be lifted out of the pit! This meant that just over 40 children aged between 7 and 17 years old, alongside with me and my friends were trapped underground! We was sent a message that told us to make our way to the pit bottom, and wait for the boiler to be re-lit, to allow us to be lifted out. We were very unsure about what was happening some of us thought there was a fire underground or on the pit top. My friend kept saying "I keep hearing a clap of thunder, I hope it's not an explosion!" but we all knew something wasn't quite right because we had spent nine hours in darkness and we were desperate to leave.

After a while, we feared for our lives, the children (who were only 7 years old) started to panicked because they were missing their parents. They ignored advice to stay where we were and they attempted to reach the surface by walking out along the drift (a drift is a sloping tunnel leading to the surface; sometimes called a **day hole**) in Nabbs Wood, we tried to stop them, but they wouldn't listen to any of us!

As the terrified children tried to make their way to safety, a stream swollen by the heavy rain overflowed into the drift. The children were washed off their feet and down to the ventilation door through which they had just passed, me and other workers frantically ran towards them to try and save them, but we were too late, the water rose and twenty six children drowned.